Distance Learning Technology Now Available to All KY Tech Schools Via "*Blackboard*"

It's official. Joe Morgan, communications and manufacturing program consultant in the Department for Technical Education (DTE), has announced a system-wide contract that allows all KY Tech schools to participate in distance learning technology using Blackboard. Equally important, the Kentucky Virtual ATC (KVATC) is in the process of being created as a result of Blackboard's technology.

What is Blackboard? Blackboard's distance learning technology is a course management system delivered to participants via the Internet. The Blackboard technology was developed to provide interesting, eventful and *technology driven* educational experiences to students as well as professionals. Its tools give an instructor the ability to deliver his/her course content and manage online classes in the classroom and for remote delivery.

In addition to all the advantages this technology provides for students, DTE staff and principals can use Blackboard to develop and deliver professional development (PD) on an as needed basis.

<u>What is the Kentucky Virtual ATC (KVATC)?</u> **When launched, the KVATC will be a statewide educational service delivering technical education high school courses and online learning opportunities to any Kentucky high school student. Additionally, professional development courses will be made available to all Kentucky Tech employees.**
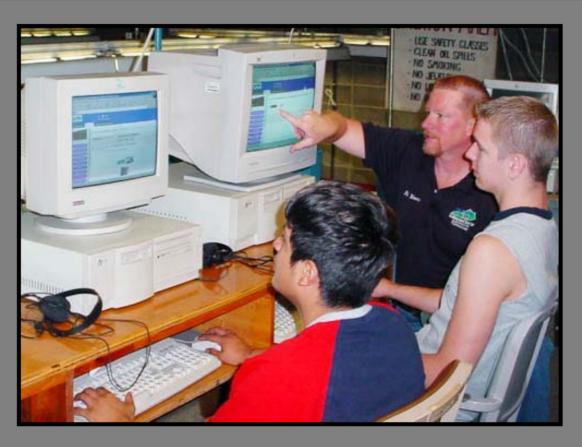
Development of the KVATC is overseen by a Distance-Learning (DL) committee of KY Tech staff including Keith Dickinson, DTE area service supervisor; Linda Floyd, Knox Co. ATC principal; John Hodge, Harrison Co. ATC principal; Tim Huddleston, Bell Co. ATC information technology teacher; Louise Jackson, Harrison Co. ATC office technology teacher; Joe Morgan, DTE communications and manufacturing program consultant; Mac Stivers, DTE technology branch manager and Al Tucker, Boone Co. ATC principal. The DL committee's work involves setting goals, technology selection and policy and procedure development.

"Our committee is refining goals for using distance learning technologies," says Morgan. "We have identified and prioritized goals and needs in policy, program, support services and infrastructure."

KY Tech has been piloting the use of Blackboard and other distance learning technologies for two years. Harrison Co. ATC was the first to begin using the Blackboard technology. Bell Co. ATC, Knox Co. ATC and Harrodsburg ATC are currently using the technology.

One of the newest Blackboard users is Roc Moore, automotive technology instructor at the Harrodsburg ATC.

"This year I started using Blackboard full force for teaching ignition systems. I used it to deliver instruction, quizzes and tests. It was great," says Moore. "The students say that this new method helps them to stay up with their studies when for one reason or another they cannot attend class. They can also review lessons on their home computer without taking a bag of books to the house. Ultimately, it has made my job easier."

In order to move the system forward, the next immediate goal is to have one or two teachers (with a minimum of two years teaching experience) from <u>ten</u> ATCs willing to become KVATC teachers. To be eligible, each teacher must hold a current Kentucky teacher certification for the program area(s) in which they teach. If you are interested, please notify Joe Morgan via e-mail at <u>joeh.morgan@ky.gov</u> of your interest ASAP.

Identified teachers will be <u>required</u> to attend two days of professional development training scheduled for June 15, 2004 at the Boone Co. ATC and June 21, 2004 at the Harrison Co. ATC.

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